

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 22, 1985

Dear Cap:

When we saw each other two weeks ago, there was no question that you were as concerned as I that the ambiguity starting to surround SDI could not be allowed to gain momentum.

As I remember we saw eye-to-eye that:

- SDI is a research program to destroy ballistic missiles per se; not a program to defend ICBMs (though that may come with the territory).
- It is the promise of boost-phase kill that provides the leverage for the President's vision.
- SDI is a central theme within the President's long-term strategy; (the best flesh-on-the-bones definition I've heard to date is probably Paul Nitze's "phased" arms-control strategy.).

Because we agree completely on these issues, I know you were as upset as I was about the New York Times article (Feb 14) -- which resulted from discussions with some of our arms control people in London, and reported we were advocating terminal defense of silos. But the ambiguity continues, as evidenced by the (attached) articles in both the Post and the Times.

There's no question there are some who believe we should remain ambiguous; that our best chance lies in confusing the opposition by not giving them a solid target to shoot at, and by having a little something for everyone. I know. I've talked to quite a number of them in just the last two weeks who are adamant on this. But for all the talk of billions to be spent on the SDI in the next several years, you and I know this is an absolutely minimal budget: one which cannot be stretched to do everything for everyone without eventually producing nothing for anyone. Worse, this approach makes a mockery of the fact that the President has a very definite agenda in his mind. Those who continue to act as though he intends simply to stumble blindly ahead "...and see what happens..." do him grave disservice.

Cap, I continue to advocate the three main tenets you and I agreed upon. I believe them crucial to the difference between the 1972 Treaty era and today; necessary if our technology program is to demonstrate its near-term reality; and vital to the President's overall strategy. And as testimony swings into high gear over the next several weeks, I want to assure you I continue to support your clear interpretation of these tenets, and of the President's ultimate goals. I still believe forthright honesty to be the best policy.

Sincerely,



G. A. Keyworth
Science Advisor to the President

The Honorable Caspar W. Weinberger
Secretary of Defense
Washington, D.C. 20301

Enclosures

Pentagon Aide Calls Antimissile Plan Central to Military Outlook

By BILL KELLER

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 21—A top Pentagon official told Congress today that President Reagan's proposal to develop antimissile defenses in space was "not an optional program" but was "central" to American military planning well into the next century.

The official, Fred C. Ikle, the Under Secretary of Defense for policy, said the program would begin with a partial defense to protect American missiles, possibly in the 1990's, and then would grow into a full-blown system to protect cities as well in the next century.

Mr. Ikle portrayed the antimissile program, or the Strategic Defense Initiative, as more a sure thing than other Administration officials have done; they have generally emphasized that it is only a research program that may or may not lead to deployment of a defensive shield.

The President's senior arms control adviser, Paul H. Nitze, in a speech Wednesday, laid out a set of strict conditions that must be met before the Administration can decide whether to develop antimissile weapons in space. These included assurance that the system could survive a pre-emptive nuclear attack, and a cost that was lower than offsetting measures the enemy might devise.

'A Bit Too Dramatic'

Mr. Ikle, appearing before the Senate Subcommittee on Strategic and Theater Nuclear Forces, contended that Mr. Nitze's remarks had been made "a bit too dramatic" in newspaper accounts.

"In a sense, he was stating the obvious," Mr. Ikle said. Mr. Nitze's conditions, he said, would apply to "any weapons system, whether its an anti-tank system or an antimissile system. If it's not effective, you don't go ahead with it."

But he emphasized that the Administration was confident a missile defense system would eventually be deployed.

Mr. Ikle's remarks drew protests from several senators, who said the initiative had been sold to Congress and European allies as a research program with no certain outcome.

Senator Gary Hart, Democrat of Colorado, said that Mr. Ikle and Mr. Nitze seemed to be saying "vastly dif-

ferent" things about the program.

"We don't quite know whether this is a research program or whether it's central to the defense of the United States," Mr. Hart said.

Mr. Ikle, in his opening remarks, said: "The Strategic Defense Initiative is not an optional program, at the margin of the defense effort. It's central. The one and one-fifth percent of the budget that it requires for the coming fiscal year will build the very core of our long-term policy for reducing the risk of nuclear war."

Pressed on Defense System

Mr. Ikle was pressed by several senators to explain whether the defense system would be designed to protect American missiles or the entire population.

"It would be a combination of the two," Mr. Ikle replied. At first, he said, the system would be designed to protect the missile fields that are the presumed target of Soviet military planners. In this early stage they could be used, too, against accidental firings or attacks on cities, though with less assurance of success, he said.

As both sides reduced their increasing nuclear offensive arsenals, the shield would be expanded to protect cities as well, he said.

Mr. Ikle acknowledged that the Russians might respond initially by building more cruise missiles and bombers that could sneak underneath the defensive shield.

But even in that case, he said, the nuclear balance would be more stable because those weapons are much slower.

Asked about the prospect of sharing defensive weapons with the Soviet Union, as proposed by President Reagan in his re-election campaign, Mr. Ikle said such a development was "unlikely" until the Russians had agreed to abolish most of their offensive weapons.

Mr. Ikle reiterated the Administration's position that its planned missile defense will not be limited by arms control talks scheduled to begin next month in Geneva.

Although the Russians have insisted that limits on defensive systems are essential to an agreement on offensive missiles, President Reagan has said that he will not give up either the current research or the future prospect of deploying antimissile weapons if they are developed.

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Panel Told 'Star Wars' May Spark Increase in Soviet Offensive Forces

By Walter Pincus
Washington Post Staff Writer

Soviet leaders "might ... increase their offensive forces" as an initial response to President Reagan's "Star Wars" Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), Undersecretary of Defense Fred C. Ikle told a Senate armed services subcommittee yesterday.

"It is conceivable," Ikle added, in answer to questions by Sen. Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.), "they may shift to [building more] bombers and cruise missiles," which would not be affected by a Star Wars system, "if they see our [ballistic missile] defenses are working."

But, Ikle maintained, Moscow eventually would realize that, faced with a capable U.S. space-based defensive system, it would be in their interest to reduce offensive missiles.

Ikle and Lt. Gen. James A. Abrahamson, director of the SDI program, who appeared with him, were questioned sharply by panel Democrats about what were described as inconsistencies in Reagan officials' descriptions of the program and how it would be handled at the upcoming arms control negotiations in Geneva.

In answers to Sen. Carl Levin (D-Mich.), Ikle said U.S. negotiators would "discuss how we can walk [toward a regime of missile-defense systems] together," but he repeated the president's statement that the United States would not agree to limiting Star Wars research.

When Levin pressed him to say what the Soviets could expect from the Geneva arms control negotiations concerned solely with the systems generally grouped under the SDI heading, Ikle responded, "confidence-building measures" and "how we can coordinate phasing in defensive systems."

Chairman John W. Warner (R-Va.) told Ikle that his remarks had created a negative atmosphere about the administration's approach

to Geneva. Warner said he believed that the United States is prepared to discuss testing and deployment of space defense systems and asked Ikle to comment.

"It would not be a good idea to speculate" on the American negotiating position, Ikle said, repeating that "short-term Soviet violations" of the ABM treaty would be brought up.

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) declared that the Reagan administration was "telling the Soviets to abide by the ABM treaty" and at the same time saying "we intended to break out on our own" when we deploy a space-based Star Wars defense system.

Ikle responded that "we are abiding by the treaty" with the current research program and that in the future, "we are proposing to renegotiate its provisions, not violate it clandestinely" as he said Moscow was doing.

Sen. Gary Hart (D-Colo.) told Ikle there was "a difference in tone" between his statement before the committee and a speech delivered Wednesday by Ambassador Paul Nitze, special advisor to the Secretary of State on arms control. Ikle told the subcommittee that SDI already was "the very core of our long-term policy for reducing the risk of war," while Nitze, according to Hart, emphasized that missile defense would be important "if it were successful."

Ikle modified his statement to say SDI would be "of central importance if it proves possible."

He also refined Reagan's statement during the presidential debates that the United States would be willing in the future to share information on defense technology.

That would come about, Ikle said, "when the Soviets agree to abolish all offensive systems ... then we would agree to work together."